



Office of Hon Anne Tolley

MP for East Coast

Minister for Social Development

Minister for Children

Minister of Local Government

- 4 APR 2017

Mr Rex Landy

fyi-request-5116-a1ef6933@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Landy

On 27 February 2017, the office of the Deputy Prime Minister transferred your request for the following information to me under section 14(b)(ii) of the Official Information Act 1982 as the information more closely aligns with the functions of my office:

- *What is the source of information for a quote from Deputy Prime Minister Paula Bennett and how a woman on a benefit can get this financial assistance for training, and from which government department/s?*

Work and Income works closely with clients in receipt of Sole Parent Support to identify barriers to employment and opportunities to improve their skills and increase participation in the community.

Work and Income provides financial assistance available for clients to enter study or employment related training. The Employment Work Readiness Assistance Programme was introduced on 1 July 2014, which offers a Course Participation Allowance for short term education or employment related training or a Training Incentive Allowance for a longer term education or employment related training course. Please see www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/index.html for further information.

Alternatively sole parents are entitled to apply for a Student Allowance including an Accommodation Benefit and/or a Student Loan for Compulsory fees, Course-Related costs and/or Living Costs through Studylink. Please see www.studylink.govt.nz for further information.

Clients in receipt of Sole Parent Support who wish to study at tertiary level are eligible to apply for assistance with course-related costs through Studylink. A Sole Parent Study Assistance Loan is also available to be applied for through Work and Income, which provides sole parents with a non-taxable, interest-free recoverable assistance to help with study costs for courses at level 4 or above on the National Qualifications Framework. This must be applied for once funding from the Student Loan course related costs has been exhausted.

Please see www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/employment-and-training/specific-employment-related-assistance/sole-parent-study-assistance/index.html for further information.

There is a range of additional financial assistance available to help clients to engage in study or employment related training. The assistance available is dependent on individual client circumstances. This could include assistance such as Accommodation Supplement, Family Tax Credit, Temporary Additional Support, Disability Allowance, Child Disability Allowance, Child Care Subsidy, Out

of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR). Other assistance such as one-off recoverable and non-recoverable payments, are available to clients to meet immediate needs payable under a Special Needs Grant, Advance Payment of Benefit or Recoverable Assistance Payment.

The assistance paid will include some payments that are made directly to a provider, such as Child Care Subsidy and OSCAR. One-off payments are paid to the seller of the goods or services provided directly.

Working for Families Tax Credits are payments designed to help make it easier for New Zealanders to work and raise a family. This payment provides on-going financial support for families with dependent children aged 18 or under and the amount payable will depend on the family situation. If a person receives an income-tested benefit as their main income, Work and Income would generally pay the family tax credit, so there is no need to apply. However, if a benefit is not payable, or if it is chosen to receive the family tax credit from Inland Revenue (IRD) instead, an application would need to be made directly with IRD. Please see www.ird.govt.nz/wff-tax-credits/ for further information.

A Community Services Card is available to low or middle income earners to help them and their family with the cost of health care. When the card is produced, it can help with reducing the cost of some health services and prescriptions. Clients receiving an income-tested benefit are automatically issued a Community Services Card through the Senior Support Centre.

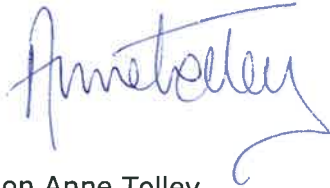
Sole parents may be eligible for a social housing property. The rent charged is based on their income received. Any entitlement is dependent on their personal circumstances and if they require help to find a suitable living arrangement. Housing Support Products are also available to be applied for, which includes a set of individual products that aim to address barriers to accessing or retaining housing by meeting needs not covered by other forms of assistance. Individual circumstances are taken into consideration when assessing entitlement to this assistance.

More information on the financial assistance available to sole parents can be found at www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/index.html.

It is not possible to directly compare in dollar value, what is available to women seeking to engage in training or study now, to what was available to people in the mid 1990's, when Deputy Prime Minister, Hon Paula Bennett was studying while on benefit. As outlined above, there is a range of options available to people in receipt of a benefit to undertake training and study. Note that the amount of assistance available to a person intending to study (or train) is dependent on their individual circumstances and it is not possible to quantify the dollar amount of assistance available as variables such as the number of children, the type of housing they live in and nature of their studies will influence what they can receive.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anne Tolley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Anne Tolley
Minister for Social Development